

When Did the World Find Out About the Holocaust?

Information regarding [mass murders of Jews](#) began to reach the free world soon after these actions began in the Soviet Union in late June 1941, and the volume of such reports increased with time. The early sources of information include German police reports intercepted by British intelligence; local eyewitnesses and escaped Jews reporting to the [underground](#), Soviet, or neutral sources; and Hungarian soldiers on home leave, whose observations were reported by neutral sources. During 1942, reports of a Nazi plan to murder all the Jews – including details on methods, numbers, and locations – reached Allied and neutral leaders from many sources, such as the underground Jewish Socialist Bund party in the [Warsaw ghetto](#) in May; [Gerhard Riegner's cable](#) from Switzerland in August; the eyewitness account of Polish underground courier [Jan Karski](#) in November; and the eyewitness accounts of 69 Polish Jews who reached [Palestine](#) in a civilian prisoner exchange between Germany and Britain in November.

On December 17, 1942, the [Allies](#) issued a [proclamation](#) condemning the “extermination” of the Jewish people in Europe and declared that they would punish the [perpetrators](#). Notwithstanding this, it remains unclear to what extent Allied and neutral leaders understood the full import of their information. The utter shock of senior Allied commanders who liberated camps at the end of the war may indicate that this understanding was not complete.

Source: [Yad Vashem](#)